

Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Investing in West Virginia



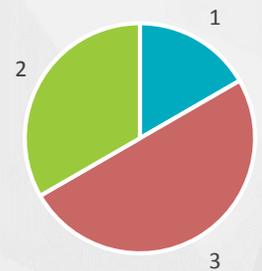
Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Created by the 2014 Farm Bill, the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is a partner-driven, locally-led approach to conservation. It offers new opportunities for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to harness innovation, welcome new partners to the conservation mission, and demonstrates the value and efficacy of voluntary, private lands conservation.

In 2017, NRCS is investing up to \$225 million in 88 projects that impact every state in the nation, including two in West Virginia. Since 2014, NRCS has invested more than \$825 million in 286 high-impact projects, bringing together more than 2,000 conservation partners who have invested an additional \$1.4 billion. By 2018, NRCS and partners will have invested at least \$2.4 billion. These projects are leading to cleaner and more abundant water, better soil and air quality, enhance wildlife habitat, more resilient and productive agricultural lands and stronger rural economies.

West Virginia Projects to Date

Projects by Resource Concern



- Water Quantity/Drought
- Water Quality
- Wildlife Habitat

6

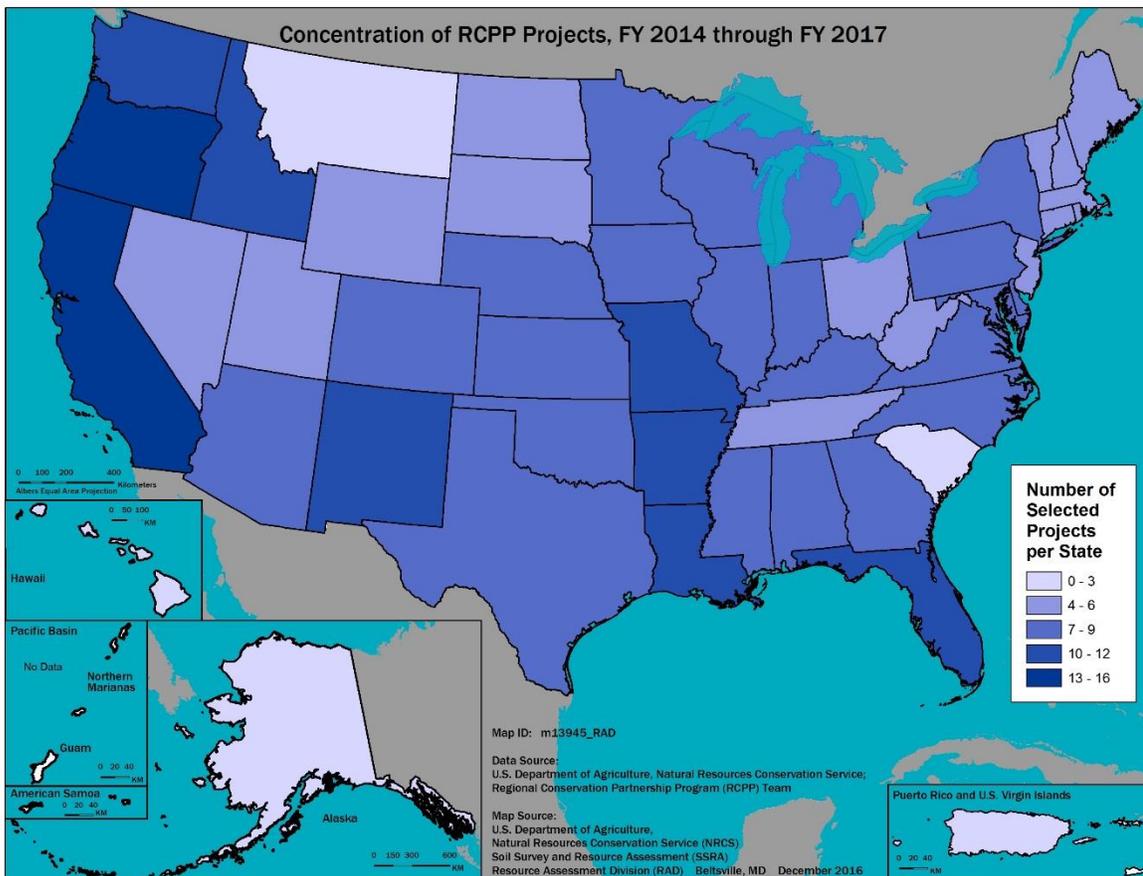
Projects

\$19.1
million

NRCS Investment

88

Partners



Existing RCPP Projects

Year	Title	Funding Pool	Lead Partner	Number of Partners	NRCS Investment
2016	WV Chesapeake Headwaters Conservation Partnership	State	West Virginia Agricultural Land Protection Authority	13	\$1 million
2014/2015	Comprehensive Watershed Conservation in Dairy and Livestock Landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay	CCA	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	20	\$7 million
2014/2015	West Virginia's Chesapeake Headwaters Conservation Partnership	State	West Virginia Agricultural Land Protection Authority	13	\$1.1 million
2014/2015	Cerulean Warbler Appalachian Forestland Enhancement	National	Appalachian Mountains Joint Venture	23	\$8 million

2017 RCPP Projects

West Virginia's Aquatic Passage: Working Farms

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1,021,500 (Critical Conservation Area - Chesapeake Bay Watershed)

Lead Partner: Trout Unlimited

Number of Initial Partners: 6

Participating States: West Virginia (Lead State)

Headwater fragmentation of brook trout habitat is a limiting factor for the range, population numbers and individual size of this well respected species and indicator of healthy watersheds. Habitat becomes fragmented when improperly designed stream and road crossings prevent timely passage of fish and other aquatic species. Brook trout, a Chesapeake Bay Program priority species, is especially susceptible population decline due to habitat fragmentation. Through the Working Farms project, the partners will replace aquatic habitat barriers to fish passage throughout the Potomac Headwaters of West Virginia by concentrating efforts of three coordinated state and federal agencies with the common goal of strategically removing Aquatic Organism Passage barriers on public lands, roadways, and, under the terms of this proposal, on private lands. This area, rich in brook trout heritage, comprises a large, attractive area for visitors and residents to enjoy its natural resources while ensuring water quality standards are met. This program will serve as demonstration restoration project adds to the ecological benefits by producing social, economic and quality of life benefits to residents, visitors, wildlife and downstream water users.



West Virginia Chesapeake Headwaters Conservation Partnership

Proposed NRCS Investment: \$1,004,400 (State)

Lead Partner: West Virginia Agricultural Land Protection Authority

Number of Initial Partners: 13

Participating States: West Virginia (Lead State)

Project partners will use an incentives approach that rewards landowners in the eight-county Chesapeake headwaters area of West Virginia who place perpetual conservation easements on lands that are the most significant for the protection of water quality, and to implement water quality protection practices in these sensitive areas. This region is an important source of drinking water for over four million people in the Washington D.C. metro area. The partnership of eight county farmland protection boards and three land trusts proposes to provide incentives to landowners to protect high priority agricultural land with important ecological functions, to establish permanent buffers around sinkholes in karst areas and in riparian corridors and to protect high-quality forests. Success will be gauged first by the willingness of landowners to implement the protection measures as part of their easement; and second by the movement toward future implementation of such measures on all easements containing those attributes identified as vital to the protection of vital resources in the Chesapeake headwaters region.